BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

EDOUARD ESTAUNIÉ

HIS WORKS AND HIS TREATMENT OF MORAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Submitted by

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(A.B. Boston University C.L.A., 1928)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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I

Biographical Sketch

A. Early life.

Edouard Estaunié was born in the shadow of the Cathedral of Dijon, February 4, 1862. Most of his childhood was spent at Rue de la Prefécture, at his grandfather's home. Since her husband had died before Edouard was born, Mme. Estaunié made her home with her father, M. Monthieu. This man had spent a youth in worldly pleasures. His final return to the Catholic faith was marked with intense fervor. His devotion to all things religious and his renouncement of all social enjoyment gave him the name "le saint homme de Dijon". In this religious environment, Estaunié grew up. As a child, he rose at five and from then on, until eight o'clock, studied. Immediately his grandfather went with him to the Jesuit College nearby and in the afternoon called again for him. All the growing boy's recreation consisted of was an occasional trip to the Circus. But in every difficult boyhood there is one consoling and sympathizing figure--for Estaunié, it was his mother. She was ever there to guide him. No deeper motherly affection ever surrounded a son. One example of the powerful love element in his early life is illustrated by this story. As a result of high standing in school, Edouard gained two or three "sous" weekly. So for one hundred weeks, he put these aside in order that he might buy his mother a little clock which he saw everyday on the way to school.

At the age of sixteen he left Dijon to prepare for entrance to the Ecole Polytechnique of Paris. During those two years of scientific study, he never failed once to go home Sundays to enjoy a day with his mother. These scientific studies gave him a means of acquiring a keener sense of modern life. They opened to him new experiences which a man of letters usually doesn't receive. They just multiplied his observations on human nature.

B. In Service of the State.

When still very young, Estaunié passed the examination for engineer "des Postes et Télégraphes" and went to Belgium as a student engineer. Four or five years later a publisher, Paul Perrin, asked to look over the manuscript of M. Estaunié's first novel, Un Simple. This he published with the request that Estaunié bring all other works to him. Out of this first encounter grew a firm and loyal friendship.

He still remained in the service of the state and was for many years director of the Telephone Service in Paris. Later he was principal and organizer of the Ecole d' Application, a training school for engineers of the Postal Service. During the World War, he was located in English Headquarters in charge of telegraphic communication between English and French lines.

In 1919, Millerand, the then governor of Alsace, called him to Strasbourg and named him president of a Commission in Alsace-Lorraine. Thus he served the state faithfully for thirty-four years without interruption. His holidays were spent in travel through Spain,

Sicily, Italy, Switzerland, and Rumania.

During all this time he continued to write every day, when freed from his administrative duties. But he never permitted writing to take up all his time. He believed that a novelist should also be an actor and should take part in the game of life. "Il faut qu'il soit autre chose qu'un romancier: j'entends par là que tout en produisant son oeuvre, il subisse ou rencontre des circonstances qui l'obligent à participer d'une manière directe et personnelle à l'état social de son temps." [1.] His lunch hours were spent in writing, usually from one to three. Then he would put aside his manuscript to go back to work.

Some of his best works were printed before he retired from public service.

The following novels were printed between the years 1890-1919.

Un Simple 1890
Bonne Dame 1891
L'empreinte 1895 Couronné par l'Académie Française
Le Ferment 1899
L'Epave 1902
La Vie Secrète 1908 Prix de la vie Heureuse
Les Choses Voient 1913
Solitudes 1917
L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre 1919

L'empreinte which appeared as one of his earliest works gave Estaunié his first real hearing from the public. Because of the subject, his grieved grandfather disinherited him.

1. Fidus Revue des Deux Mondes Page 356

In 1916, M. Estaunié married. There are tributes in many of his books to her whose exquisite spirit and unfailing devotion never left him.

C. Retirement.

After the death of his mother, whom he loved dearly, Estaunié became very nervous. It seemed that all familiar objects in the home breathed her memory. Even the furniture seemed to have come to life. In the dedication to Les Choses Voient he speaks to her since he feels that she is not dead but always near. Estaunié has always suffered a great deal from ill health. The happiness of being received in the French Academy in 1923 must have been great.

Today he has a country home far from the city, where he is sufficiently isolated to enjoy his remaining years. Recently he has become ill, suffers a good bit from fainting spells. Though he cannot write much more, he wishes to live on. C'est une personne bien bonne.

II

Place in French Literature

A. The great literary movements of 1870-1900 had their influence on the development of M. Estaunié's power as a writer.

The first great movement, L'intellectualisme, ("système qui affirme la prédominance de l'intelligence sur la sensation et sur la volonté")[1] goes back to the Positivism of Auguste Comte, which belief, along with Estaunié's Jesuit and scientific education characterizes his first two important novels, L'empreinte and Le Ferment.

Pessimisme, a second movement which has been defined as "la vanité de tout effort", finds a place in Un Simple, the story of a futile sacrifice of a boy's life for an unworthy mother.

None of his works seem to me to be the fruit of "dilettantisme", which is "moins une doctrine qu'une disposition de l'esprit, à la fois subtile et voluptueuse qui nous incline à nous prêter à toutes formes de la vie sans nous donner à aucune." The middle period, where appear La Vie Secrète, Les Choses Voient, Solitudes, L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre, L'Appel de la route, and L'Infirme aux mains de lumière, is called the mystic period by Marjorie L. Henry.[2] During this period he is the painter of the inner life, of the soul of man.

The last movement which is a consequence of the first three, L'amoralisme or "l'art et la morale complètement indépendants"[3] influences M. Estaunié's works more or less. This "immoralité apparente" is a characteristic of a great many French novels.

1. La Rousse Nouveau Petit Larousse Illustré
2. Henry Introduction to L'Appel de la Route

B. M. Estaunié belongs to the school of psychologists and analyists which grew out of the reactionary movement against naturalism. "Le réalisme profond a toujours eu pour effet dans notre pays, de conduire à l'étude de nos passions, des mobiles de nos joies et de nos peines: il a toujours été essentiellement la peinture du coeur humain. Et c'est bien sous cet aspect qu'il s'est manifesté, lorsqu'a paru la brillante école des psychologues et des analystes...qui s'efforcait de retrouver la grande inspiration balzacienne. L'originalité des romanciers qui ont commencé de publier leurs oeuvres à partir de 1880 est d'avoir rajeuni le réalisme en faisant rentrer dans l'étude de la réalité l'étude de l'âme."[1]

1. Bédier et Hazard <u>Hist. de la Litt. française</u> p. 296

III

Works and Treatment of Moral and Social Problems

A. Un Simple

The earliest of Estaunié's works was dedicated to his beloved friend and master, Guy de Maupassant. It is the story of a rather discouraging sacrifice of a youth on the altar of filial devotion. Stéphane Deschantres was a dutiful son who waited like a servant on his ailing mother from whom he took all sorts of abuse. Frequent attacks of migraine gave her a wretched disposition.

Stéphane had gone to the College Sainte-Marie for two years but had been so bashful and timid a student that his associates called him "un simple". When called on in class, he stuttered, muttered, and even cried. An imbecile, his mother termed him.

The years that followed were lonely ones, but it never occurred to him to change. Freedom frightened him and his home offered a sense of security. In order to pass his baccalaureate, he engaged a mathematics tutor, M. Mouillac. His first real friendship grew out of these early morning lessons in Geometry. When he came to take his examination, he found himself adequately prepared but a little lacking in courage. M. Mouillac advised him to trust to luck. Just before the examining period, a cousin, Mme. Ferramus, paid a visit to Mme. Deschantres. She proved a demure sort of person and not a little interesting to this bashful boy of twenty-one. Her proposal to rent a small cottage at Vic, a village neighboring Balpech, was quickly taken up since a change might prove beneficial to Mme. Deschantres. About this time, Stéphane's teacher lets him in on a big secret; he is to be married soon to a charming Suzanne that he recently met in Toulouse.

"Les heures effacent les heures....Ainsi, lorsqu' une pierre tombe sur une surface d'eau, grosses ou petites, les rides se forment et fuient avec la même vitesse les unes allant très loin, d'autres mourant à leur naissance."[1] Monday came, the day when he would receive his final mark. He was sure, in spite of his excellent training, that he had failed. His loneliness, as he finds himself friendless in the waiting crowd, with not a soul to turn to for sympathy, is pitiful. Soon he is being paged. His name is first on the list. He is at last admitted. Hurrying out, he rushes to Rue Vieu-Raisin to tell M. Mouillac of his good fortune. Alas, that man has been gone for two days to Balpech. Keenly disappointed, he makes his way home, receives his mother's kiss and learns that they are to leave on the morrow for Vic.

Marc Ferramus, their cousin, was at the new house to greet them the next day. That evening, Stéphane and his mother had dinner with Sidonie and made the acquaintance of an aunt, Baptistine, who was acting as servant for the Ferramus. During the dinner conversation, the aunt disclosed the latest town gossip. "At last Suzanne Mercier has a man."[2] On inquiring who she was, Mme. Deschantres received the reply, "une fille" in the form of a slur from Sidonie. Stéphane paled to hear his teacher's fiancée thus named. After dinner, the doctor and Mme. Deschantres walk off together. Baptistine thinks they're rather interested in one another.

A new life began for Stéphane. He rose at 5:30 in order to enjoy the solitude of early morning nature. He would then return in time to get his mother's breakfast. Most mornings, he paid a short visit to Sidonie whom he loved to listen to.

One evening, when Deschantres had retired early, Sidonie came

1. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 43
2. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 81 Indirect

looking for Marc. He had been missing since noon and she thought he might be with Mme. Deschantres. Since it was late, Stéphane accompanied her home and assumed courage enough to ask what she meant by calling Suzanne Mercier such a derogatory name. When he learned the kind of woman, into whose clutches his beloved master had been caught, he was horrified. Never before had he been exposed to the sordid side of life. Sidonie laughed to think that a youth was so shocked. Obviously his duty was to warn his master.

Saturday, Stéphane found M. Mouillac at his fiancée's home, where he had had a room for the past fifteen days. They were overjoyed in seeing one another. But in an endeavor to straighten matters out, Stéphane only made M. Mouillac's profession of love the more strong. He would not believe that his Suzanne was guilty. To him she spelled perfection. Overhearing their loud talk, Suzanne stepped into the room. Stéphane declared that Sidonie was right in saying that he would never be listened to. At that Suzanne flew into a rage. "Why Sidonie had no right to talk. She certainly had troubles of her own. Every one knows that your mother only came to Vic to be near Marc Ferramus,"[1.] and with a sardonic grin she left them. M. Mouillac ordered his former friend to leave, never to return. "La porte se referma brutalement avec un tressautement d' allegresse du marteau qui dansait dans son anneau, comme joyeux de garder sous son abri les deux amoureux."[2.]

All the way home he pondered, "To think that that girl would dare say such infamous words about his mother?"[3.] He meets Sidonie who tells him that her anxiety was very silly the preceding night. Baptistine had sent Marc to market for some trout. Since he was in a bad humor, Sidonie went along. The first doubts begin to assail him.

1. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 137 Indirect
2. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 139
3. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 141 Indirect

"Why had Sidonie come to them in search of Marc? Why was Marc never home afternoons? Why did he intuitively shy away from him?"[1] On arriving at the cottage, he finds his mother cranky since he won't disclose the purpose of his errand. She also sends him out. The maid, while fixing the wood in the fireplace, comments on the ugliness of her mistress saying that it will all pass by afternoon. This comment causes annoyance. "What if his mother were waiting for Marc?"[2] He falls asleep. A sound startles him. He awakens as someone enters, but it is only his mother. He hastens to embrace her, overjoyed that it's all a lie.

From time to time little remarks, unsuspectingly made, cast their shadows. Stéphane finally decides to learn the truth from Sidonie. Baptistine tells him of her temporary absence but increases his fears by relating the recent actions of Marc. He no longer can sleep easily at night but must be out continuously.

On returning to Vic, Stéphane is delayed by a crowd gathered around a church wedding. Alas! M. Mouillac is walking down the church steps with his bride on his arm. The village folk comment on the foolish one who met and married Suzanne. "How disgusting! And the only one missing is handsome Marc Ferramus. But he has another at present. Oh, but be careful, her son listens here."[3] Doubt has at last conquered.

Then Stéphane began to spy. He would never let his mother out alone. If she wanted to sleep, he wanted to sleep too. Such sadness now took possession of him. His life was again lonely. There was not a solitary compensation. One evening his mother sent him early to bed. "Perhaps Marc was coming." In the morning, he entered his mother's room only to find it empty. Convinced that Marc and she were somewhere

1. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 151 Indirect
2. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 154 Indirect
3. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 176 Indirect

together, he fled from the house, down the main street, and met them near the church. "What are you doing here with my mother?"[1] Marc only laughed and took his leave. Since it was Sunday, they went into Mass.

From then on his mother seemed reluctant to forgive his abrupt and violent entrance on her tête-à-tête. He in turn remained wounded. Then, one morning, he went down stairs to find the door unbolted. He had remembered plainly bolting it before retiring. Someone must have entered or gone out.

That evening the Ferramus with Baptistine came to dinner. Stéphane, complaining of a headache, went to his room early. He was awakened in the early morning suffering with a sort of grippe, and quite a fever. His mother's door showed a light beneath it. Voices came to his ears, and one was a man's. Feverishly he got up and kept watch by the bedroom door. Afraid to face his mother, he went down to the living room. His plan was to kill this man by throwing his whole weight against him. But when Ferramus descended, the boy was stricken with a momentary paralysis and was unable to move a muscle. When he became himself again, he fled into the night, screeching the name of this blackguard. Although stumbling frequently, he was determined to kill Marc at any cost. Once too often he stumbled, fell, and was powerless.

After a short stupor, he recovered enough to return home. A scolding mother awaited him. She thought she would have to begin to lock him in nights if he disdained his rightful bed. Declaring he

1. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 195 Indirect

didn't know what she meant and that he felt as though he really had disturbed her the previous night, he withdrew. What a torture in knowing the naked truth! Better still to doubt her guilt.

That morning Sidonie comes to inquire after his health and becomes rather flirtatious. He is sorry to discover that she also has duped him, asking so boldly for his love. Disgusted he orders her to leave, requesting her never to return. Through the window he watches her joke over his naïveté.

Suddenly he trembled for Mme. Deschantres was in back of him wanting to know what existed between him and Sidonie that they should so angrily speak. Stéphane says he wishes to leave Vic immediately and return home. But his mother calls him ungrateful not to think of her health first. "Why you have never paid any board. You are useless and have never made anything of yourself."[1] She proposes that they go to the château to see Sidonie about it. But he never wants to see her. Mother says she knows why because he has been spending his nights with her. He can stand it no longer, "Quand vous allez avec le mari, vous croyez donc que j'irais prendre la femme!"[2] She pales, frightened. As she advances toward him he knows she is going to kill him. "Leave me alone,"[2] and he flees.

"Mourir, quelle joie!"[3] That will mean the end of his doubts, spyings and filial misunderstandings. Death will obliterate all. They all duped him, mother, Mouillac, and Sidonie. This series of falls had been the payment of a life of good will, uprighteousness and honesty.

1. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> Indirect p. 270
2. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 275
3. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 276

He hastens along perceiving the Vic-Siège. "En allant vers elle, il savait que la mort au moins ne le tromperait pas, et il la goûtait d'avance, comme le repos ineffable, le grand retour à la vie de toutes ces choses qui, autour, continuaient de sourire, ensoleillées....."[1.]

1. Estaunié <u>Un Simple</u> p. 279

B. Bonne-Dame

People on the street instinctively called her Bonne-Dame. It was a charming name, though no one ever knew where it came from. Her real name was Hatier de Belazeilles. She had lived in Châteaudun since her daughter's marriage. Hers is the story of a mother's sacrifice for an ungrateful daughter.

When Bonne-Dame was born, her father's disappointment at not having a son was so great that he decided to bring her up like a boy. Therefore, she had to be dressed like a boy, had to learn to ride horseback, and each day had to climb one tree in the park.

When about eighteen, she met M. Hatier, a teacher of Saint-Jammond, whom she fell in love with. Their marriage proved happy and was uneventful save for the arrival of a daughter, Germaine.

The first misfortune that Bonne-Dame suffered was her husband's sudden death. The second was the necessity of permanently establishing herself and her daughter in Montauban with Aunt de Sallanches. This old maid hardly gave the two food enough to keep them alive.

Germaine married a M. Oscar Lajudal, a widower in a comfortable position. Bonne-Dame left for Châteaudun where she quickly made friends, especially among the young girls of the town. Letters from her daughter revealed to Bonne-Dame the place that Mme. Lajudal was filling while she, the real mother, was away. Naturally jealous, she leaves for her daughter's home. Here she finds a changed Germaine. In her joy at seeing her daughter, she almost

smothers her. Oscar is annoyed and tells her that expressions of joy so manifested will hurt Germaine. Bonne-Dame is given a room in the attic where most of the old furniture is stored. She cries when she discovers M. Hatier's dusty portrait among them. Finally Germaine had to admit the cause of her ill health and her mother is grievously hurt to think she wasn't told before of her condition. Because of one or two disagreements with Oscar, Bonne-Dame is asked to leave. Never does she intend to return.

Several months later, Bonne-Dame received a telegram announcing that her daughter had given birth to a son. That evening she heard a dog's bark, an ominous sign. In the morning they found her in her armchair with a letter in her hand saying that the son had died.

Meanwhile, her landlord "père Badoin" has lost most of his money in investments so he sells out his interests in the lodging house to Bonne-Dame. At the same time she hears that the bank Parouel, in which Oscar has put all his money, has failed. Inwardly she enjoys a secret joy, since she has never quite forgiven him. But she realizes that now she is the real mother and invites them to be her first lodgers. The Lajudals accept without hesitation. For three months the house was a joy to live in, so harmoniously was everything run. Even aunt de Sallanches proved generous in presenting them with a gift of a large sum of money. Humorously Bonne-Dame comments, "Ah! vous pouvez le dire, c'est un miracle. Je me demande ce qu'elle a pu faire dans ses pèlerinages, mais on l'aurait

trempée à Lourdes jusqu'au menton d'Achille que c'est une générosité à ne pas y croire!"[1.]

But time told a different story. Soon Bonne-Dame was asked to move her room downstairs, to change her meal hours, in other words, to sacrifice all those little pleasures and habits in order not to inconvenience her daughter. Under the moral strain, she broke down and during her convalescence found out to her dismay that she was de trop in her own home. Strange, was it not, that she who had given haven to her daughter, who had renounced all those dear habits for her tastes, should succeed in making herself a burden. "Il faut que ce soient les vieux qui s'en aillent! c'est la vieillesse qui ne veut plus vivre!"[2.] But where to go was the question.

Then one morning, M. Lajudal presented her a letter from M. Pujol of Montauban, Aunt de Sallanches' lawyer. The statement was made that Mlle. de Sallanches found it necessary to claim the 3000 francs that she had loaned four years previous. Then Bonne-Dame remembered that she had signed a slip but had neglected to take it. And to think that all these years she had deprived herself of everything in order to keep expenses down. Now she would have to assemble all her savings to meet this bill. The next day she told her daughter and son-in-law that she was leaving for a business trip and incidentally was paying the money they owed their aunt. They took it as a natural thing. For several days, she sought information at the various Charity Centers in Paris concerning an asylum for the aged. She was unsuccessful in finding one for herself. Some of

1. Estaunié Bonne-Dame p.201
2. Estaunié Bonne-Dame p.244

these homes had such long waiting lists that it would take five years for admittance. Then one morning, Bonne-Dame met the Duc de Fresnes, whom she used to play with when a child. She inquired of him whether he knew of a nice place where one of her friends could go. He said he would be glad to assist her. "L'odysée de Bonne-Dame était finie: maintenant qu'elle avait tout donné, le bonheur enfin venait."[1.]

"Le bonheur est ainsi au fond de toute existence, semblable à un fruit rare que protège une dure écorce. A nous de briser l'écorce à coups de coeur; la paix naît des misères des années, comme la vie est faite de mort, comme les fleurs viennent, sortant de terre."[2.] At Passy, in the "Providence pour les gens du monde" Bonne-Dame found real happiness.

1. Estaunié Bonne-Dame p. 296
2. Estaunié Bonne-Dame p. 297

C. L'empreinte

Leonard Clan received his early education at Saint-Louis de Gonzague, one of the many Jesuit schools of France. This story is an arraignment of the system of religious education in this school. "Chaque cervelle est un casier où, par ordre et à force de mémoire, les idées sont étiquetées et empaquetées à jamais. L'initiative est détruite jusque dans son désir."[1.]

Leonard Clan lived with a maiden aunt at Nivers, along the Loire River. His father and mother had died when he was a child. His guardian, M. Artus, lived in Paris and gave little attention to his charge. Having always attended Saint-Louis de Gonzague, Leonard was possessed with a feverish piety instilled by frequent church attendance and by the sermons and retreats of the Jesuits. "O la douceur inexprimable des songeries que bercent les voix de l'orgue, les parfums sacrés et le scintillement des cierges!"[2.] At intervals he read the prayers on a station in life and prayed that God might assist him. "Que dois-je faire pour me sauver? C'est à vous de m' imposer les lois qu'il vous plaira. Encore une fois, parlez-moi! Fallût-il m'immoler, me voici à vos pieds, prêt à sacrifier le reste de mes jours de la façon que vous estimerez la plus digne de votre grandeur."[3.] Finally he convinced himself that he had a vocation, so, in confession, he talked matters over with Père Propiac. The latter was more than pleased but tried to impress on his child the seriousness of leaving one's people forever.

1. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 37
2. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 27
3. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 36-37

In the meanwhile, a call came from Paris. M. Artus wanted to see Leonard. Reluctantly the Fathers allowed him to depart, carefully instructing him beforehand on the dangers of city life. The guardian is greatly disappointed that Leonard wants to enter the seminary, so much so that he won't permit it until the boy is of age.

During the retreat, which follows his sojourn in Paris, he does a great deal of thinking on the happiness of those men of the world. They seem altogether happy and content to consider most lightly the salvation of their souls. He begins to doubt his calling and to discover in his confessor someone anxious to assign him to God at any cost. This priest preached heaven to him in order to arrive there himself. Hurriedly he writes to Père Propiac that he feels he is not destined for the perfection of a saintly life.

Seven years later, we find Leonard alone in Paris, having been left a fortune by M. Artus. During a visit to an old schoolmate, Jouques, he meets his young sister, Madeleine. She seems quite interested in him. Jouques tries to explain why Leonard has never made a go of anything in Paris. "Il y a dans ton être je ne sais quelle impatience inexplicable, une faim d'inconnu que rien ne satisfait. Je me demande parfois si elle ne résulte pas, selon le mot de Malville, d'une empreinte originelle, d'un choc en retour d'éducation, par exemple, agissant à distance et dont les années n'ont pu atténuer l'effet."[1] Returning home, he met a woman who brushed by him, stopped farther on, and waited. He let her go and marvelled at his self-restraint. Later on, Servet, another colleague, introduced him to this girl, Marcelle.

1. Estaunié <u>L'empreinte</u> p. 163

About this time he learns that Cheudaine, a third school chum, has been elected to the chair which he had hoped to fill in one of the schools of Paris. He was certainly a "raté", not able to succeed at anything.

An appointment having been arranged ahead of time, Leonard at last talks with his former confessor, Père Propiac. The priest warns him to be very careful out in the world, since he really belongs to God. The priest doesn't seem to be terribly discouraged. "Il ne faut jamais désespérer des brebis égarées, mon ami; dans nos maisons, nous donnons tellement de religion à nos élèves que tôt ou tard, fût-ce à l'article de la mort, ils la rendent.....tel un aliment mal digéré."[1]

One day later, he encountered Marcelle alone in the park. "et sa voix était pareille au bruit clair que font les ruisseaux des montagnes."[2] But when she asks him to come with her, he refuses, since he knows of Jouques' sister Madeleine's love for him. Jouques has mentioned this before and has tried to impress upon him the duty of raising a family. Sometimes he wonders whether he is doing wrong. Unfortunately, his early training has strengthened so far the idea of celibacy.

He sensed deeply the injustice of losing the teaching position to another. Now he was still so alone. He had no mother, no father, and no friends. His aunt was so cold, he could not think of returning to her.

1. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 204
2. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 208

"Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! pourquoi m'avez-vous abandonné? Mon Dieu, que vous ai-je fait? O Jésus! Jésus! faites-moi mourir, ou que justice me soit rendue! O Jésus! je n'ai personne, vous êtes mon abri, mon recours, mon désir. Pourquoi cet abandon, cet oubli?"[1] Then the heavenly presence seemed to reply, "c'est moi, je suis la voie, la vérité, la vie...."[2] He goes to the library and picks up the Bible. The more minute becomes his analysis, the less prestige the book retains. Yet everyone has for hundreds of years knelt before it. He alone denies it, therefore, he must be childish.

Soon after, Leonard looked for an opportunity of betraying God. Until now he had kept his promise, made when he quit Saint-Louis de Gonzague, to live a pure and holy life in the faith. One morning, meeting Marcelle and feeling very lonely, he takes her with him. After a short week of happiness, she knew he loved her no longer. She seemed to see "l'autre" in his eyes. "L'autre--elle l'avait deviné--c'était l'être marqué jadis d'une empreinte indélébile, celui que Léonard avait cru chasser de lui-même et qui était revenu."[3] He knows he loves her no more. "Façonée pour la prêtrise, (l'âme) elle était veuve à jamais!"[4]

Once more he returns to Nivers to find the city as unchanged as his turbulent state of mind. "Il me semble que mes pensées se prolongent comme dans une salle trop sonore. Elles vont frapper douloureusement mon cerveau, rebondissent, toujours pareilles et confuses, Je cherche à les noter: les mots m'échappent. C'est un vide, à s'évanouir....."[5] He blames everything on his early education

1. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 222-223
2. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 223
3. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 275
4. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 276
5. Estaunié L'empreinte p. 307

which wanted him to accept everything without hesitation. The Jesuits destroyed his life and now what was their plan--to make a good Jesuit out of him. But he reflects that if Propiac really believes, then what he did for him was right and quite heroic.

Soon Propiac comes to visit him. Leonard realizes his hatred for the priest, but fears that Propiac will sometime return for him. This the Father does and finds that he has no longer a child to deal with, but a man. "I address myself to an intelligence and use arguments that it can understand. Today is God's day. Don't let it pass. Your lips deny God, yet your heart confesses him."[1]

"But I wish to live."[2]

"Vous vivrez. L'infini satisfera la faim désordonnée de votre coeur. Vous vouliez aimer: les âmes seront votre conquête et vous les chérirez. Vous vouliez agir: L'apostolat sera votre oeuvre; l'apostolat! c'est-à-dire l'action secrète la plus profonde et la plus irrésistible qui soit ici-bas!"[3]

That night Leonard decides to give his all to God. "J'ai mordu au fruit de science, et, le trouvant amer, je l'ai jeté loin de moi. Laissez-moi croire, Seigneur! qu'à votre table les mets sont plus doux, et qu'au sortir du festin vos convives se reposent à jamais--toute l'éternité!"[4]

1. Estaunié <u>L'empreinte</u> p. 340 Indirect
2. Estaunié <u>L'empreinte</u> p. 341 Indirect
3. Estaunié <u>L'empreinte</u> p. 341
4. Estaunié <u>L'empreinte</u> p. 344

D. Le Ferment

In Le Ferment the author studies another social problem, the leaven of scientific education. The book, which appeared in 1899, was dedicated--"Ala mémoire du grand artiste G. de M.--mon ami et mon maître."

Julien Dartot had received some little instruction in Latin from a priest friend. Since his father wanted to make a business man out of him, he entered the "Ecole Centrale" of Paris and specialized in electricity. When he received his diploma, he truly expected to conquer worlds, but was disappointed to find that he couldn't even secure a small position. What little tutoring he procured went, with the small earnings of Lucienne, his mistress, to support the two of them. Finally through the influence of one of Lucienne's friends, Chenu, he succeeds in becoming established in Belguim with a noted chemist. This Chenu expresses a radical point of view concerning society. "Au nom seul des ouvriers, le bourgeois s'épouvante: imbécile! les ouvriers sont le bras; le cerveau est ici! Ils sont la pâte bonne à pétrir; ici le levain, le ferment invisible qui doit, pour vivre, transformer son milieu et le décomposer!"[1.]

Two and half years later, we find Julien a fairly successful chemist. His only real enjoyment in life is the companionship of Thérèse Bonnal, the daughter of a neighbor. At a dinner party given by M. Bonnal, Julien is offered an excellent position in Paris in the office of the "Compagnie Indo-Chinoise de navigation mixte." He got this through a former acquaintance, M. Dazenel. He really hates to leave Thérèse, whose influence has been enormously beneficial to his

1. Estaunié Le Ferment p. 95

rebelling nature. So far she has held him to a promise not to gamble at "La Maison", one of the recreation spots nearby. She really doesn't mind leaving the luxury of her own home and living on his salary, so there is no need for his worry over money matters. From the settlement of his father's will, he receives a small amount of money which he decides to increase. Obviously, the choice was definitely made between his fiancée and the gambling house.

Two days and two nights elapsed before Julien returned to his room. In the meanwhile, he had won a fortune. Like in all gambling, in order to balance the happiness of the victor, there remains the anguish of the loser. Mordureux, a fellow worker, suffered the loss of his entire savings. Julien had no scruples about this, for he firmly believed that all was fair in Chance.

In Paris, as secretary to M. Dazenel, Julien comes in contact with many of his old friends and acquaintances. First he renews the friendship of Mme. de Biennes, whom he formerly met at his uncle's "soirées". He also visits Chenu, who has married happily. Here he learns that Mordureux, who had lost all his earnings at "La Maison", committed suicide soon after Julien quit Belguim. Since there is to be a new company founded "La Société de Méking" Julien gives Chenu some tips on investments.

The next day finds Julien with two of his school mates talking over their scientific education. Since one is a doctor, another a politician, and a third a business man, they conclude that it wasn't worth much. But then reason tells them that it's possible that school didn't give them all the happiness they looked for, but

it didn't promise to. One suggests that the English system is better. Here it is necessary to be a workman before following the engineer's course. At least black hands recall to an individual his origin.

That very day, Julien encounters Lucienne, his former mistress, now the wife of Chenu. She asks his advice on investments which she had overheard him recommending the previous night. There remains one of two things for him to do, sacrifice his ambition to become a great success, or warn this innocent woman of the ruin that will be hers on the morrow. His philosophy--to everyone his chance, decided for him.

It turns out that Julien is a success, while Dazenel and the company he represents fail. Gradoine, a friend of the Chenu family, interrupts his self-possessed joy over his success, by attempting to shoot him because of his cowardly interview with Lucienne. Unsuccessful, he flees the room shouting, "vive l'arnachie!"

Here is a new ferment. "Non pas le ferment de vie que tu croyais, mais bien le ferment de mort, celui que les bourgeois aveugles ont cultivé et dont ils vont mourir!"[1.]

Slowly Julien sits down at his desk, first arranges papers, then takes a piece of writing paper and begins a letter to Mme. Biennes, whom he now has courage to ask to become his wife.

E. La Vie Secrète

"Notre vie avouée n'est qu'une façade derrière laquelle se cache notre vie profonde, seule importante."[2.] This idea dominates the novel of La Vie Secrète, in which M. Estaunié is the painter of the inner life of man. Here the seven characters discover at the same

1. Estaunié Le Ferment p. 345
2. Lalou Littérature Francaise Contemporaine p. 585

time that they have nothing in common with their outward appearances.

First there was M. Lethois, fat and jolly, who was known about Montaigut as very ordinary and commonplace. Inactive practically all day, he gave him self over evenings to prodigious work, when he mounted to his garret to continue his study of the life habits and life history of ants. For twenty years, he had hidden his secret from even his closest friends, M. l'abbé Taffin and Mlle. Noémi Peyrolles of Saint-Puy. His plan was to soon organize his study into a unique book, which would render him fame and fortune. Then would he not be the most respected and honored citizen of the town? But there arrived a terrible catastrophe; that crisis in the human life that Estaunié loves to study. One evening as Lethois was returning from the garret, his candle went pale and he realized that his eyesight was failing. Not totally blind at first, he suffered succeeding attacks which weakened his vision. Then followed "une lutte effroyable de l'homme qui tend toutes ses forces pour édifier son oeuvre, et resister au mal, et dans l'angoisse, qu'il n'entend révéler à personne, côtoie la démence...horeur de cette souffrance, de ce secret, de cet isolement ....M. Lethois parvient à achever l'introduction de son 'Histoire anecdotique des moeurs, coutumes et habitudes propres aux diverses espèces connus sous le nom générique de fourmis.'"[1] One morning, however, M. Lethois drew the information from a young doctor that he would soon be blind. Such was the shock that his nerves completely gave away. His egoism had killed him.

1. Mawry <u>Revue Politique et Littéraire</u> p. 602

Was it possible that M. l'abbé Taffin, the village priest, could have a "vie secrète"? Yes, indeed for he secretly loved a saint. She was the patroness of Montaigut, Saint Letgarde, and it came about in this way. One day of doubt and discouragement, he knelt before her altar. "Ici commence le miracle: à peine étais-je prosterné qu'une douceur me réchauffe, me rassure, me sauve...Ce que Dieu tant de fois m'avait refusé, ma sainte, tout de suite me le donnait! Mes paroissiens s'étonnent de mon culte passionné pour sainte Letgarde: puis-je dire de quelle crise elle m'a guéri? La vérité est que j'aime comme jamais homme n'a aimé; j'aime, vous entendez bien? j'aime une Sainte! Sa présence adorée m'envoloppe. Je la sens à toute heure écarter de moi les doutes; elle peuple la solitude où mon coeur défaillait. Quelles joies approchent de la mienne? Pour elle, je donnerais tout; elle est ma bien-aimée, mon refuge que rien ne peut atteindre, puisque la mort même m'emportera vers elle![1] In this way M. Taffin built his altar of devotion to the glory of a saint. Imagine, then, the horrible setback he experienced, when he received a letter from the German savant, Heimath, stating that her life story was pure legend. Again the crisis, but this time one that the priest recovered from and returned to his parishioners more altruistic and more devout.

In Montaigut one woman, because of her coldness, was more feared than loved, even though she was a model of Christian virtue and Christian charity. Everyone in the village remembered how Noémi Peyrolles' father had cruelly sent away his only son, since he could never bring himself to pardon this son a mistress and child. But no one

1. Estaunié <u>La Vie secrète</u> p.49

ever realized the regret Mlle. Peyrolles suffered because of her father's severity. "L'acte de son frère était condamné par les seules règles de vie qu'elle respectât. En refusant l'enfant, c'était l'intégrité de la famille, le fondement légal de toute société qu'on défendait. Cependant, si le drame avait recommencé aujourd'hui, était-il certain qu'elle eût âgi de même?"[1.]

Since she had never had the love of a child, Mlle. Peyrolles always thought of her brother's son as her own. His education she had provided for, and now she waited to see him grown to manhood. One day he unexpectedly appeared and she grasped him to her. For one day only she tasted infinite pleasure in having Marc with her. But on the morrow, when he told her he was a poor doctor and had come only to borrow a large sum of money, she was grieved. Marc was deeply in love with a consumptive and wanted the loan for her cure. Were they married? No, but they loved each other dearly. There followed an angonizing scene in which Mlle. Peyrolles realized that she had lost out, since she could not tolerate this other woman. Marc left the next day. Later, however, when she learned of Marc's child, Mlle. Peyrolles left to join her nephew and his wife: "sa vie secrète se dénoue en un irrésistible élan de maternelle tendresse."[2.]

Doctor Pontillac, Mlle. Wimereux, Servin, and Le Pêcheur all seemed simple, ordinary folk, but all had their secret life which M. Estaunié reveals to us.

Jude Servin had been experimenting with the workers in his furniture factory in Revel, near Montoigut. But in spite of his many

1. Estaunié La Vie Secrète p. 63
2. Mawry Revue Politique et Littéraire p. 603

attempts at establishing friendly relations between himself and his employees, he found himself confronted with an impending strike. Because he had recently given employment to a Mme. Pastres of a rival firm, which had been ruined by his strong competition, Servin found these workers of his most dissatisfied. They didn't like this woman introduced in their midst. Either she went or they. Regardless of the fact, Servin remained firm and wouldn't dismiss the new arrival. The strike was on. And to think that he had believed that money and good-will made for contentment among factory workers. However, he felt little or no hatred for Mme. Pastres. The business was obviously dying out because it must die, and not because this woman had come.

The next day, when the workers found that their boss wouldn't open up the factory, three of the leaders went to the Mayor of the town. Somehow they believed that he at least would be on their side. What was their disappointment, then, to find that he couldn't do a thing for them. Rushing out from the mayor's office, they determined to break down the factory doors in order to enter. But alas! on approaching the building they saw it aflame.

"Le gagne-pain."

"Alors, immobiles, ces trois êtres qui avaient un instant symbolisé la grève et que la grève avoit rejetés, ces trois êtres redevenus pareils à de pauvres petites unités perdues, clamèrent:

"Au secours."[1]

1. Estaunié La Vie Secrète p. 378

F. Les Choses Voient

This novel followed the death of M. Estaunié's mother, at which time he was in a very nervous condition. It tells of the dishonor and tragedy of family life as witnessed by three pieces of furniture, the Mirror, the Clock, and the Desk. And why should such a strange story come about? Simply because the House was being bought and all the furniture, except these three pieces, forgotten in the garret, was to be sold. In order that the story might survive the separation of the other furniture in the House, the story had to be told.

In 1831, the Clock entered the kitchen of Marcel Clerabault's house, at the request of a servant, Noémi Pégu, who had been retained because of faithful service to her dead mistress. The very day of its arrival, there came also to the house Marcel's cousin, Mme. Rose Morcins, to wait in Dijon for her divorce case to come to court.

Believing that she is some day to become mistress of the house, Noémi resents the entrance of Rose, whom she finds amorous of Marcel. Since Mme. Clerabault had left in her confidence letters from a lover, Tiphaine, the judge in Rose's case, she plots to betray the cousin and separate her forever from the master. By diluting some blue ink, Noémi changes the date of the love note from 1822 to Jan. 4, 1832 and drops it near Marcel's bedroom door. The first crime has been committed. On learning about the note, Rose commits suicide.

Marcel marries Noémi, but only, as he tells her on their wedding night, in order that, as two assassins, they may always live together. Obviously the truth about the lovenote has meanwhile been disclosed. In the bridal chamber, Marcel had hung a portrait, plainly

visible from the bed, to ever remind them both of Rose. Soon after Marcel dies, seized with an attack of apoplexy. On the next day, the clock was stopped and stored away in the garret.

To continue the story, the Mirror tells of the anguish he saw in the face of Noémi Clerabault during the years that he remained her confidant. In order to secure the fortune, which rightfully would have come to him had Marcel remained widowed, a cousin, M. Pichereau, asks for the hand of Noémi's daughter, Line, in marriage with his son, Juste. For some time Line, a very beautiful girl, has been seeing a young man, who still remains "l'inconnu". Even though she is with child, Juste consents to a marriage which may some day bring him and his father a fortune. After the Pichereau family have established themselves with Mme. Clerabault, Léonie, a former servant, dismissed months before, comes like a shadow out of the past with Line's love notes. Given to M. Pichereau originally, they were finally presented to Juste as a wedding present. The shock brings about Noémi's death. Consequently, M. Pichereau, like Noémi, gets the House through a crime. Because of his dislike of the Mirror, he sends it to the garret.

In 1858, the letters were hidden away in the drawers of the Desk. Seven months after her mother's death, Line gave birth to a son, Claude. This child was thin and had mysterious eyes. At times he showed genius in mechanical inventions. In 1887, a M. Flondalle came to the House with a splendid offer to buy. Somehow he seemed to resemble Claude, so Juste looked up his name to find that it was also Claude. When Juste inquired why he was so interested in the House, M. Flondalle replied that he was in search of the memories of a loved one.

Formerly, he had made a short sojourn in Dijon, but had foolishly left before marrying a woman, whom he dearly loved. She had died two years after. Juste tells Claude that this is his father. He realizes that Claude is the legitimate heir, so decides to sacrifice both the House and his son. Pichereau, now a very old man, dies from a fall which may have been accidental but probably was suicidal. Five days later, the House was closed and the Desk, containing the letters of M. Flondalle, was stored in the garret.

G. Solitudes

In this group of short stories, M. Estaunié treats of the great moral problem of loneliness. He says that all of us have at one time or other suffered the loneliness of finding ourselves "tout seuls". And how does this happen even to the happiest man--just because loneliness is found at the root of universal order and is hidden under the fantastie design of human destiny. In the folowing story, Les Jauffrelin, solitude becomes an instrument of death.

After five years of separation from a boyhood friend, Pierre Jauffrelin, the author, was one day urgently called to the small village of Lugrin. He found his friend's married life very unhappy, almost dismal. From Arlette, the wife, he learned that Pierre mysteriously accused her of some infidelity of which she wasn't cognizant. Pierre, himself, appeared ruthlessly silent.

In the afternoon, Pierre went off on bicycle to Meillerie where he had business. When he did not return by evening, a small searching party was sent to find him. Morning brought the "dénouement". He was brought back entirely disfigured from a death through drowning.

Three days later, when the village priest brought over Pierre's diary, the author thought at last he would solve the enigma, "en séjournant ici et à ce moment, tu me rendras service."[1] But what he did read was so shocking that he found it hardly comprehensible. The very person who had destroyed the confidence held between Arlette and Pierre was himself. Every time the name Revel was mentioned, Pierre had the feeling that Arlette loved it. There really was no reason for such an obsession other than the friendship these two had enjoyed as children.

1. Estaunié Les Solitudes p. 192

Nevertheless, Pierre was lonely: "Je suis seul, Arlette est seule, tout le monde est seul....L'univers est un désert où chacun suit sa route sans rencontrer d'autre compagnon que son ombre ...."[1] Finally his jealousy so overcame him that he dwelt on a suicide as the one way out. "Si la solitude est l'essence de la vie, pourquoi la mort ne serait-elle pas l'accès dans un pays où l'on n'est jamais seul?"[2] So victim of this morbid suggestion, Pierre Jeuffrelin committed suicide in ignorance of his wife's true devotion.

But just because of this story, the author would not have us believe that loneliness always kills. Frequently it is a blessing, strengthening and raising us up. The really strong people have always been lonely as well as the savants, artists, and saints. "O déchirement de la Solitude! comme tu nous emportes loin de nous-mêmes, c 'est-à-dire vers les hauteurs!"[3] Thus solitary people are like those mountain climbers who have lost their way in the crevices and are coming very near heaven.

1. Estaunié Les Solitudes p. 238
2. Estaunié Les Solitudes p. 248
3. Estaunié Les Solitudes p. 265

H. L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre

In L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre, M. Estaunié has given one of his best character devolopments in the solitary person of M. Justin Baslèvre. In this book "L'amour éveille en un homme médiocre une grande âme mystique."[1]

M. Baslèvre was secretary to the Minister of Commerce in Paris. His was an ordinary life without too many disturbing outside elements. Twenty-nine years after coming to Paris, however, he did meet a change which was very upsetting. Into his office one morning came an old time acquaintance, Gustave Gros, in quest of a favor. When he visited the Gros home a few days later, M. Baslèvre fell in love at first sight with the wife, Claire. Here a point of intense interest to me. Although he had never been in the apartment before, the clock and many other pieces of furniture were very familiar to him. I think this apparent spiritualism, including the "visage" of Claire Gros, that is continually with him throughout the book, is accountable to Estaunié's suffering after his mother's death.

Meanwhile, through his janitress, M. Baslèvre aided a young woman, Mlle. Fouille, in a small money matter. This woman later became an interesting figure.

Frequently, after the first "Rendez-vous" with Gustave, M. Baslèvre visited evenings with Claire alone, since her husband was usually busy with his writing, as he called it. When Gustave began to be away for over night and for several weekends, Claire worried a great deal.

1. Lalou Littérature Francaise Contemporaine p. 595

At this time, M. Baslèvre wrote Claire of his deep love for her, but she refused to finish reading the letter. Her duty to her husband was very clear to her.

Since Claire had been always more or less anemic, she was unable to throw off a cold and became very ill. Before she died, she left M. Baslèvre a large envelope to open after her death. In this he learned of her great love for him: "Mon ami, j'ai menti: votre amour est la flamme à laquelle je réchauffais mon âme qui grelottait; votre lettre, l'eussé-je détruite, aurait continué de l'incendier, puisque, à force de relire, les mots s'y étaient gravés. Bénie soit la mort qui m'en permet l'aveu!

"Mon ami, j'ai menti: on ne résiste pas à un amour tel que le vôtre, je vous aimais...Bénie soit toujours la mort qui me libère et m'assure l'éternité pour vous rejoindre.

"Mon ami, je vais mourir, mais le coeur plein de vous, dans la joie de votre tendresse et vous livrant la mienne.....Je ne vous quitte pas: je vais vous attendre...."[1]

So while she had lived Claire was separated from him, but now that she was dead, she never left him. Always her "visage" was before him, consoling and intimate.

Every Saturday, M. Baslèvre kept a "rendez-vous" with her in the old apartment which he kept open. Not a piece of furniture had been removed, even the clock belonging to Father Gros remained on the mantle piece. Each week, the maid set the table for two, and served dinner for two. One Saturday, for the first time, the "rendez-vous" was interrupted. Mlle. Fouille, the young woman whom M. Baslèvre had aided financially,

1. Estaunié <u>L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre</u> p. 166

came in search of M. Gros who had been her lover. Since the death of Claire, he had deserted her. Mlle. Fouille's embarrassment was alleviated somewhat, since M. Baslèvre had realized for some time that she was unknowingly responsible for Claire's death. But it was much more terrible when she learned this--that Gros was married. That fact had never been known to her. It's impossible to conceive of two adventures more diverse--that of one, who had renounced everything and whose devotion was simply idealized, and that of the other, who had known complete happiness in love and who now suffered abandonment. This dialogue illustrates the reasoning.

Il répliqua:

"La douleur, quelquefois, aide à mieux vivre. N'est-ce pas depuis que j'ai perdu ma bien-aimée que je sens mon coeur délivré?"

"Le mien ne bat que pour désespérer. Nous ne parlons pas la même langue, faute sans donte d'avoir traversé les mêmes contrées."

"Mon amour," soupira M. Baslèvre,"m'a révélé la souffrance et la pitié. Tout de lui m'a grandi. Jusqu'au sein de la détresse, je ne cesse pas de le bénir."

"Le mien," repartit Mlle. Fouille," s'est débattu dans le mensonge. Sa honte me submerge, et, tel quel, si un miracle me le rendait, je l'accueillerais avec transport."[1.]

After Mlle. Fouille had left M. Baslèvre began to realize the wonderful gift of true love, and measuring his prodigious ascension he joined his hands: "O ma bien-aimée, qu'as-tu fait de l'homme que j'étais et que je ne reconnais plus?"

1. Estaunié <u>L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre</u> p. 205

"Sur la table, les muguets et les roses embaumaient. Une paix divine éclairait l'humble asile des grands souvenirs de M. Baslèvre. On aurait cru aussi que, toutbas la morte répondait: 'J'ai fait de toi une âme!'"[1].

1. Estaunié L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre p. 206

I. L'Appel de la Route

In this novel, which is a "chef d'oeuvre", the theme is clearly stated in the closing pages, "La souffrance est l'appel de la route." The story came about when three friends got together after several years of separation and began to discuss human suffering and the enigmas it proposes to our minds and hearts. They all agreed on its universality which made it the more unjust and incomprehensible. Also "la souffrance tire son origine le plus souvent de sources irresponsables, inconscientes de l'oeuvre qu'elles font."[1] In order to get away from abstractions, each turned to concrete examples which he had been witness of.

L'un d'eux commence

Doctor Duclos had got acquainted with the Lormiers of Semur when he took care of the mother before her death. Another time he was called to the house to see the daughter, whom the father was seemingly worried over. For twenty years he had worked at a certain lamp invention which he now found a success and a sure means of providing a dowry for Mlle. Lormier. He was overjoyed that her sickness was not serious.

In the same town were the aristocratic Traversots who had been trying to marry off their child, Annette. There was a prospective husband in view in the dashing young La Gilardière who had recently become one of the shareholders and officers of the Banque Chasseloup. Unfortunately, Mlle. Lormier became interested in this man, too, and made her father miserable because of her melancholy. She would leave the dinner table at the most awkward times to watch the youth crossing the public square.

1. Estaunié L'Appel de la Route p. 4

The Traversots gained the friendship of La Gilardière through the village priest, Abbé Valfour, a friend of the former's brother, Abbé Manchon. Annette and René became quickly amorous of one another. It was hoped that Mme. Manchon would come to Semur to settle the affair but she failed to appear and sent no explanation. Then something terrible happened; there were some bank notes missing at the Bank and the guilt was placed on La Gilardière. Wrongly accused, he withdrew. Two days later the notes were located in the very room where they had been misplaced.

Four years later, Dr. Duclos made a short sojourn in Versailles where he met a broken M. Lormier. His story was that of a man who had known the depths of human suffering. About the time of the Bank disaster, his daughter had begged him to leave Semur for Paris. They were there but a few months when she took her leave for Versailles to enter the order of the Carmelite Nuns. From that day, he never saw her face unveiled. Two years later a letter arrived stating that she had died of consumption. After her death one of the priests came with her letter stating that, believing she had killed a soul, she had given herself to God. Duclos never had known his daughter's lover but on reading this explanation of her sacrifice, he would have given all to have known. The priest said that Sister Thérèse du Sacré-Coeur was one of the most beautiful little saints he had ever known. When M. Duclos asked him as confessor to disclose the name of her lover, he answered that names were never asked for in confession and that the mystery were better held intact. Duclos and the priest left the house together and when the former inquired the name of his new acquaintance he was

astounded. Abbé Manchon, Mlle. Lormier's confessor, was the brother of La Gilardière.

Un Autre Répond

When Duclos had finished, Tinant, much excited, said he thought he really could continue the story of the Lormiers. Regardless of the fact that fictitious names had been used, he felt convinced that there never were two Sister Theresas nor two La Gilardières.

Mme. Manchon's last concession to her son's "dilettantisme" was a trip to Italy. For this trip she engaged an efficient traveling companion, M. Tinant. When they returned home to Paris, this friendship lasted even after La Gilardière, the son, became permanently established at the Bank Chasseloup. Although M. Tinant saw René little, he kept up a continuous correspondence with him. In one of his letters, René spoke of his invitation to visit the Traversots. That afternoon he had been on a long hike and had gone under cover from the rain into the railroad station. A young woman came in to mail a package and when she started to go out, he asked, if she were going to Semur, might he not accompany her under the umbrella. Her veil covered her face but he could hear her mellow voice and became interested. In a moment of folly, he kissed her. She took offense and would not give any information about herself. This was the last he saw of her for several months.

Sundays, René used to go home until he became amorous of Annette Traversot and then he spent his week-ends there. In the Manchon household was a servant, Lapirotte, who took keen delight in her mistress's disappointment at her son's delay in visiting home. She seemed to be plotting something. Finally the Traversots told René that people

of Semur were talking, since his mother would not come to arrange the engagement. Certainly there must be some question of his legal right to his title or a doubt as to his legitimate birth. In order to assure himself René went home and learned from his mother that his title was a fancy of Abbé Manchon. The more to reassure him, Mme. Manchon agreed to visit Semur.

In the meanwhile, Mlle. Lormier, the lady at the station, who had invested quite a fortune from her mother's will in the Bank Chasseloup, came to René's office. In her conversation, she threatened that wrong would soon befall him. Her love had become such that she was blinded to everything sane.

By the eighth day René was most downcast since his mother hadn't yet arrived. A cold really prevented her coming out. Broquant, an old bank employee, came in about noon to say that Mlle. Lormier had been in, but since Chasseloup was busy, she had withdrawn. René joined him in a conference downstairs, after which he went home. That afternoon, he learned that some bank checks were missing and that the blame was placed on him. Knowing that Mlle. Lormier had been in the building he figured that this was the carrying out of the threat. A visit to Mlle. Lormier proved unsuccessful--she only confessed everything, but asked him to first question his brother before condemning her.

Having packed up his belongings, René went to Paris to see Abbé Manchon. "Ah! voici la vraie douleur qui paraissait! Devenir pauvre, n'est presque rien: la torture est de se trouver seul tout à coup, si effrayoblement seul qu'une fois mort, personne ne saura peut-être quel nom inscrire sur votre fosse."[1] As he boarded the train at Semur, his

1. Estaunié L'Appel de La Route p. 271

mother got off on the other side, having sent him a morning special which he failed to receive.

His brother's story was the most startling ever imaginable. When the priest was sixteen and René was about four, his father made him promise to take the name of Manchon from his young brother and to send away. Soon after the promise was made, the father was brought in dead from the hunt. His suicide was the culmination of suffering because of his wife's illegitimate child. Because of this torture, René had really killed the priest's father. So in order to keep the vow, the name La Gilardière was given to René and his elder brother went to the priesthood to be out of the house. Now the tables were turned, for everlasting torture lay in store for René since he now knew all. The next day, Tinant received a visit from La Gilardière stating that he was on the way to Morocco to join the Foreign Legion.

Several months later, Mlle. Lormier came to Tinant to inquire for René's address. She had just learned that an old friend of her mother's, Lapirotte, had lied concerning La Gilardière's birth. She wept when she learned that he had only that very day been reported missing. She told of her love, of her mother's fortune, of her plan to secure his love. When Annette came in the way, she had attempted to break off the engagement through gossip. After she had learned that Mme. Manchon was coming, she had threatened René. The day at the Bank she found herself alone in the office where were the desks of La Gilardière and Chasseloup. Both at the time were below in the meeting. Nervously wandering about, she upset some papers on one of the desks. Hearing a step, those she held in her hand, she threw in a waste paper basket. Somehow the wind blew

them about and they thus were temporarily missing. So Mlle. Lormier was at Tinant's wanting to write René that she also had lied, believing she was saving him.

Le Troisième Conclut

After this recital, the three friends asked one another what conclusions they were to draw. Finally, the author, as the third friend, stated that up to now they had all used fantastic names, but really wasn't Mme. Manchon et M. Lormier, Mme. Z et M. X.? The other two agreed so he concluded the story.

In 1914, he was in Versailles working at La Recherche du Soldat which had for object to furnish families with information of soldiers missing. Some of his work brought him in contact with Mme. Manchon. One day that he was in her home, he made the acquaintance of her new boarder, M. Lormier. Both got to talking about their loved ones who were now dead, and the suffering caused by their loss. They presented their stories and asked, "A quoi bon?" In the midst of their philosophizing, M. l'abbé Manchon entered. Seized with panic, M. Lormier bid them good-day. The conversation was renewed and someone asked the priest the meaning of suffering. His answer was lengthy but was absolutely a justification of "le sens de la souffrance." "Sans la souffrance, l'homme n'aurait jamais songé à l'immortalité. Par la souffrance, il en acquiert le besoin et brisant les limites d'un présent qui ne compte plus, projette son existence véritable dans les régions de l'infini."[1.]

"La souffrance est l'appel de la route. Si pénible que soit l'effort, marchons guidé par lui, vers le pays où j'espère que la Justice de Dieu perdra son obscurité, parcequ'il y fait toujours clair."[2.]

1. Estaunié L'Appel de la Route p. 325
2. Estaunié L'Appel de la Route p. 327

J. L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière

In this book, M. Estaunié tells of the devotion of a young commissioner of Bordeaux to an invalid sister. The author plays the part of a friend who finds the sacrifice extreme. Here is the story.

Anselme Théodat was about to be married to the niece of his employer when his father's untimely death makes it necessary for him to give support to a sister, a paralytic, who lives alone in the paternal homestead of Saint-Christol. The future that he had so carefully planned for and which was about to be consummated had to be renounced. "Adieu, Bordeaux! Adieu, la fille du directeur, le beau mariage et l'avancement! C'est la disgrâce, la vie épouvantable du petit employé en exil qui n'a que son traitement pour vivre et qui est obligé de subvenir aux besoins d'une soeur infirme, naïve, enfantine, mystique, ne connaissant rien de la vie et qui, pénétrée de reconnaissance pour le dévouement que l'on a pour elle, croit, cepandant, que l'on se dévoue avec plaisir et sans arrière-pensée."[1.]

Since his friend could not understand his sacrifice, Théodat invited him to visit them at Saint-Christol to find out for himself. This he did some weeks later. Théodat came to meet him in order that he might personally welcome him and introduce him to his sister. As the two entered the house "une voix légère, aérienne-musique ou parole ailée, on ne savait--répliqua:

"Soyez le bienvenu, Monsieur; vous faites tant de plaisir à mon frère que j'en éprouve, avant de vous connaître, autant que lui."[2.] Then in the half obscurity, he saw the sister whom he had always suspected to be his enemy. "apparition déconcertante.....les mains,

1. Pawlowski Les Annales p. 557
2. Estaunié L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière p. 91

translucides, attiraient le regard; pareilles à deux lumières, elles éclairaient la draperie de la robe. Et que dire de la voix?..timbre d'enfant, des grâces de femme, le clair cristal, enfin je ne sais quoi encore de lumineux qui allait rejoindre la lumière des mains et du visage."[1]

The invalid wasn't even intelligent; she read only La Croix du Dimanche, but in spite of this, there emanated from her a certain freshness, a subtle distinction, an irresistible charm that made those around her completely forget the sordid side of life.

While he was there, the friend thought he would make the best of it and engage Mlle. Théodat in conversation on her brother's sacrifice. It was useless, however, for Anselme entered upon the scene at the wrong time and denied everything concerning his former life. In her innocence, the sister believed his very denial. In an endeavor, later, to explain his sacrifice, Théodat says that she seems like a child entrusted to his care. He cannot help loving her in defending her. One would say that he has made an ideal of her grace, charm, and childlike purity.[2] "Et pour pousser jusque dans leurs dernières conséquences les intentions de M. Edouard Estaunié, nous pourrions ne pas dire que c'est, en réalité, un véritable sentiment religieux que le frère professe pour sa soeur; car qu'est-ce, en somme, que la foi, sinon d'adorer des êtres infiniment supérieurs que l'on pare de vertus et de beautés dont on est soi-même incapable?"[3] So Théodat says that when one hasn't a dream of one's own to realize, it is marvelous to find another's intact. He trembles for fear of breaking his sister's dream, her belief in him. But if he were only sure that there were a

1. Estaunié L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière p. 92
2. Pawlowski Les Annales p. 557
3. Pawlowski Les Annales p. 557

God above perceiving him!

Fifteen years elapsed before Théodat was again heard from. In 1914, a letter arrived saying that Mlle. Reine-Vigile Théodat had recently died. Deep was his friend's sorrow, "Imaginons qu'on tourne le bouton de l'électricité dans une pièce obscure où dorment depuis quinze ans les reliques d'un grand amour: j'éprouvais le même battement de coeur, devant une résurrection pareille."[1.]

Soon after the two friends met to talk things over. When asked if he regretted his life, Théodat said that were he to live it over, he would do the same. Some mysterious and incomprehensible instinct urged him on. Some might call it "duty" others "fate". However, he frequently asked himself what was the recompense. The author says it should be found in the satisfaction of a duty well accomplished "un coeur qui ne regrette rien."[2.]

In the conversation, Théodat inserts a story from his childhood. When he was sixteen and his siter much younger, they were taken on a picnic to the village of Durfort, lost in the mountains. During the visit, the children climbed the mountain side. Perceiving some pretty and unknown flowers on a ledge above them, the sister scrambled up. These small purple flowers she brought down to Anselme who asked the good of such beautiful things when no one could see them. Her reply to this question was, "C'est pour que le monde soit beau quand le soleil le regarde!"[3.]

Théodat didn't seem to know why he had told this but his friend replied with certitude, "Parce qu'ayant créé de la beauté, vous aussi ne doutez pas qu'il y ait un soleil pour regarder votre âme."[4.]

1. Estaunié L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière p. 146
2. Estaunié L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière p. 172
3. Estaunié L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière p. 175
4. Estaunié L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière p. 176

K. Le Labyrinthe

Caught in the labyrinth of suspicion, François Pesnel and his wife never succeed in getting out. No amends that they make, make one another ever obliterate the mistake once made. "Car voilà l'imprévu. La vérité n'a pas tué le mensonge. Elle ne peut pas le tuer. Il colle aux mains. On s'imagine l'effacer: la trace reste et le mal recommence."[1]

Because his aunt, Mme. de Castérac, left no will, François Pesnel became heir to her large mansion and splendid fortune. While rummaging around in her library one day, he located an old finger marked missal from which fell a small piece of paper containing this statement: "Je donne après ma mort tous mes biens, meubles et immeubles, à Alice de Vaubajour, qui m'a servie correctement.

Comtesse de Castérac
Cambalèyres 26 novembre"[2]

So the fortune belonged to another unless in some way he could prevent her from knowing it. Not being able to quite ignore the existence of this other person, Pesnel went to visit her under pretense of learning a few facts about his aunt. When he found her a very honest sort of an heiress, he began to have qualms about the will so offered marriage to alleviate the injustice.

A few days after they were married, Pesnel went again to the missal, whose secret he had wanted for days to destroy. For the first time he realized the lie it represented; "une fois entré dans le mensonge, on en devient la proie sans espoir de salut? qu'ayant trempé les lèvres dans la source empoisonnée, la vérité même serait impuissante à me rendre la fraîche saveur de l'eau pure?"[3] Somehow or other he

1. Estaunié Le Labyrinthe p. 303
2. Estaunié Le Labyrinthe p. 59
3. Estaunié Le Labyrinthe p. 114

didn't have quite enough courage so he locked the book up and went downstairs.

Many times he was tempted to reveal the truth, but each time he failed in his endeavor. He even took the note to a lawyer who pronounced it null, tore it up, and told him to forget it. This, however, was impossible, since Pesnel had found, when he last opened the missal, that someone had put the will in the wrong page. Perhaps Alice had read it, and knew how he had paid for her love. Although he had established the legality of his act, he now realized that the moral law tolerated no detour. The will was torn up--he really hadn't stolen anything. However, he had thought the will valuable and had allowed himself to steal Alice because of it. Finally, unable to stand it any longer, he told her of the will, but neglected to state that he knew of it before their marriage. She in turn confessed that she had found it soon after her arrival in their home at Puy. All this time she suffered over the thought that their love might have been a game or the payment of a debt.

Even though he had tried to make up for all her suffering, because of his lie, he was unable in the end to really compensate her. He still felt as though they wandered in a labyrinth where his first lie locked them in. Sometimes they would call to one another, but their different paths never met.

L. Le Silence dans la Campagne

In this collection of short stories Une Nuit de Noces is quite appealing. George Mayne had been in Paris two years as an apprentice to his brother, a noted engraver, when, because of some little misunderstanding, he found himself alone and penniless in the large city. Too proud to return to his father's farm, he roamed the streets in search of work. Since he was unsuccessful in securing any, he finally had to depend on charity. Realizing that the habit was taking possession of him, he firmly resolved to break it. For one whole day, he searched for work of any kind, meanwhile steering clear of the places where he was accustomed to find refreshment. One piece of bread crust he picked up from the gutter, he shoved in his pocket for the next day. By evening, he was so completely fatigued that he forgot about his hunger, "Quelque chose est survenu, plus redoutable que la faim: le sommeil!"[1]

When he found himself sleeping while walking, he began to look seriously for shelter. First he took refuge in a house being constructed on a back street. Rats, gnawing at his breakfast, woke him and drove him from there. Next he located an old deserted shed and fell asleep in a box. This time two policemen disturbed his slumber. What was he to do? Even the benches in the park and the sidewalks were prohibited as sleeping quarters. The next thing he knew, a woman stood over him. When she found he was neither dead nor drunk, she brought him to her basement room, fed him on bread and cheese, and gave him a narrow bed to sleep on. Before he retired, he asked her why she had brought him in. She really didn't know. They learned they were both artists, the only difference being that she now worked as dishwasher in a Café. He

1. Estaunié Une Nuit des Noces p. 121

expressed the view that it was so nice not to be alone. His only way of thanking her was, "vous permettez que je souffle" and "Merveille enfantée par un simple changement de mots! Subitement, parce qu'il venait de renoncer au Tutoiement, George Mayne sentait qu'aucun autre merci n'eût valu celui-là: en même temps, il sembla que l'air fut purifié de toute équivoque. Comme soulevées par un même flot, deux épaves venaient de monter vers le ciel et d'entrevoir l'horizon."[1]

As he fell asleep, George had but a single thought--that she remained dreaming in her chair. And that was their wedding night.

1. Estaunié Une Nuit de Noces p. 142

M. Tels qu'ils furent

In this novel, M. Estaunié has taken for theme, "le souci de l'honneur familial".[1] He says in the preface that the duty of keeping this honor intact was the legacy of which he himself was most proud. Most of the characters in the story are members of a bourgeois family of the middle 1800's.

Jean Cadiran, who relates the story, was left an orphan at the age of eight and went to live in Dijon with his aunt, Adèle Doublet. His early education, which was of the strictest kind, was in the hands of two competent tutors. He got very little enjoyment out of his new surroundings, at first. There was only one sympathetic person, and that, his nurse, Claudine. To her he came with all his boyish troubles. But during the winter following his arrival in Dijon, Aurélie, Aunt Adèle's only child, returned home from the convent. This young lady of twenty years did considerable to stimulate the latent powers of her young cousin. Often she told him stories of his famous grandfather, Augustin-Irénée Doublet. There was also their Aunt Marie, who had been forced to leave home when she wouldn't consent to a marriage that Grandfather had arranged. No one ever mentioned her name in the house; she was an outcast.

When Aurélie had been home a few weeks, an audience was arranged for her with Monseigneur, the Bishop of Dijon. Aunt Adèle, Jean, Uncle Louis, and Antoinette, a servant in the latter's household, were present also. The interview had obviously been planned to talk over Aurélie's future. All were very shocked when that young lady came out with a startling statement. Had someone only consulted her beforehand,

1. Estaunié-Preface Tels qu'ils furent p. VI

he would have known that she loved someone, and intended to marry only him. Her lover's name she gave as Abel Goubin, a Protestant and Republican. The family realized what an impossibility such a marriage would be. Regardless of Aurélie's outburst, Monseigneur gave her his blessing and told her to have faith in God.

Arriving home, the family talked over this unexpected incident. Aurélie convinced her mother of her seriousness and asked for her consent. Aunt Adèle remained firm. Hadn't they had one Marie in the family already? Should Aurélie go with Goubin, she would leave without dowry and would never be allowed in the house again.

Some few days later, Jean departed for Dole, to attend the Jesuit school of Notre Dame du Mont Roland. Leaving Aurélie grieved him considerably.

For three years Jean remained with the Jesuit Fathers. Meanwhile he had written once a week to Aunt Adèle, and had received her answer by return mail. There had always been a few lines from Claudine, but never so much as a word from, nor about, Aurélie. Then Uncle Louis brought him back to Dijon in 1870, at the time when the Prussians were in the city. From Claudine, Jean learned that Aurélie had been married over a year now and no one spoke her name (now) anymore. Aunt Adèle seemed terribly changed, and very listless. Jean noticed when he talked to her about school, that she hardly seemed to hear him. In spite of his extreme youth, he sensed her longing for Aurélie. In her heart she must have surely loved and wanted her daughter.

Then, one day, an old friend came to the house with the news that Aurélie was in need of money, about three hundred thousand francs.

Without this assistance M. Goubin, her husband, would probably fail in a certain business undertaking. But when Aurélie came to the house, asking for admittance, Aunt Adèle was forced by Uncle Louis into a refusal. He simply wouldn't tolerate her in the house.

That very afternoon, Aunt Adèle suffered a slight nervous shock, so deep was her grief in not seeing her daughter. In the evening the family lawyer was called and gave out the news that Adèle was worth a little over two hundred thousand francs. To make up the three hundred thousand, then, she would need to sell the house. Uncle Louis was willing to give his sister a loan, provided she would consent to his marriage with Antoinette, his servant girl. Since Adèle wouldn't allow the family honor to be tarnished, she ordered the lawyer to get ready what money he could for the morrow. She would have to borrow the balance needed. But in attempting to raise herself out of bed, she again suffered an attack which weakened her further. As Jean leaned over her, to do her last bidding, he heard her whisper, "Aurélie." He got his cap and sweater quickly, and ran to the telegraph office to wire for his cousin.

The next day he waited until evening for the arrival of Aurélie's train from Beaune. By six o'clock he was discouraged and about ready to depart when he saw Aurélie coming. Her husband's business affairs had been straightened out and he was again at his ease.

Jean related the happenings of the afternoon and evening before, imploring Aurélie to hasten to her mother's bedside. He explained how Aunt Adèle had planned to aid her daughter, and how even Uncle Louis had been willing to assist with a loan. But Jean remarked that he thought Louis wanted to save the family a scandal. When the two cousins arrived

before the house, they found Claudine waiting. They knew they were too late. "Trop tard. Lasse d'attendre sa fille, tante Adèle, depuis une demi-heure, s'est décidée au grand départ et a cessé de vivre...."[1.]

"Trop tard....derniers mots d'une histoire qui, pas plus que la vie, N'a de dénouement visible. Folie évidemment que de décider le sacrifice du dernier nécessaire pour éviter l'ombre d'une tache sur un nom, folie encore que de marcher sur son coeur, quitte à en mourir, plutôt que de reconnaître une mésalliance."[2.]

Even at her last hour Aunt Adèle didn't have the assurance that her daughter was saved, nor that Aurélie loved her. Only those in the room saw Aurélie's tears fall quietly on a hand that was cold in death. Ainsi "le décor de la réalité Masque les seulec vies véritables."[3.]

1. Estaunié Tels qu'ils furent p. 310
2. Estaunié Tels qu'ils furent p. 311
3. Estaunié Tels qu'ils furent p. 312

IV

Conclusion

A. Treatment of Social Problems.

In his thirteen novels, just given in résumé, M. Estaunié has treated many living problems, both social and moral.

1. L'Empreinte, which won for him a real hearing from the public, was concerned with the vital problem of the education of youth. In this novel, M. Estaunié shows himself strongly opposed to the Jesuit type of education, first, because of its narrowness, and second, because of its destruction of all individual initiative.

"Chaque cervelle est un casier où, par ordre et à force de mémoire, les idées sont étiquetées et empaquetées à jamais. L'initiative est détruite jusque dans son désir."[1]

Throughout the somber pages of this book, we follow the unhappy figure of Leonard Clan, who, because of the impress of his Jesuit education, was mentally deformed forever. At first he fled the infamous Père Propiac, who had tried to inveigle him, as well as other youths, into the Société de Jésus. However, his inability to adapt himself to anything not religious, made success of any kind evade Leonard. Once outside his own milieu, he found difficulty living in any other. Finally despairing of happiness in any form as a layman, he gave himself up to the priesthood.

But M. Estaunié's criticism of French education does not stop with that of the Jesuits, for in Le Ferment we find a careful study of the consequences of too scientific an education. Julien Dartot didn't covet land, as did his farmer-father before him. What he most wanted

1. Estaunié L'Empreinte p. 37

was luxury. During an evening of chance, he won a fortune at the Casino. Here began the change-from a poor but honest chemist, Julien Dartot became the unscrupulous and fraudulent Paris business man. It seems rather incredible, nevertheless M. Estaunié would have us believe that this change was a result of an education, that, lacking in spirituality, awakened in Dartot only an enormous appetite for luxury.

2. In the social part of La Vie Secrète, there is the problem of the strike as a powerful weapon in the hands of the workers. An industrial worker, Jude Servin, too confident in the goodness of his men, returned, one day, to find an impending strike in his furniture factory.

The workers had previously come with the request that Servin regulate the hiring of his men. Because they were accustomed to receiving a yearly dividend, which had amounted to about seventy-nine francs, these men resented employing new people, who would share in their profits. During the preceding year, twenty-three new men had been employed, thus lowering all individual benefits quite a few francs. They considered the practice of adding new men to the already large force, working in the factory, very unfair to them.

In answering his men, Jude Servin was most unsympathetic with their demands. He stated that he could easily deprive his employees of the few additional francs, altogether. He was rich enough so that he didn't even need to continue his business. He had built it up, not for himself, but for them. What was more, if they were discontent, the doors were open for them to leave by.

I am inclined to believe that M. Estaunié's sympathies are less with this young socialist, and more with the strikers, especially with Mme. Pastres. This young woman came to Servin's factory for work, because

through strong competition her family's business had been ruined by his. Servin reflected that he had destroyed this small business and was, therefore, willing to hire the woman. The workers, however, said that if Mme. Pastres became one of them, they would leave. As a result of the new arrival, the strike was on.

At first the men remained outside the building, hoping that Servin would give in and dismiss Mme. Pastres. Instead they found that he had turned all the power off in their machines. Now they couldn't possibly enter.

Several of the prominent leaders in the strike sought aid from the mayor, whose decision, they believed, would be in their favor. Alas, his answer was not consoling.

"Magistrat municipal, organe élu de tous les citoyens, j'ai le devoir étroit de rester neutre."[1.]

While the workers were awaiting the news of their delegates, they saw Servin close the factory doors.

"Qu'on fût libre de quitter le travail, cela ne faisait doute pour aucun; en revanche, que par réciprocité Servin fût maître de tarir la source même du travail, qu'en disparaissant, il pût rejeter tous aux hasards de la faim, cela était unique, inadmissable."[2.]

The one impulse of these workers, who saw their daily bread snatched from them, was to break down the doors and open the factory by force. But, as they approached the building, they noticed small flames curling from under the roof. Suddenly the entire structure burst into flames. All yelled, "Au secours", but the factory was quickly being razed to the ground.

1. Estaunié La Vie Secrète p. 375
2. Estaunié La Vie Secrète p. 376-377

3. A few of M. Estaunié's novels resemble the "romans à these" of Paul Bourget,[1] especially in the treatment of the two problems, family honor and integrity of family life. In several places, M. Estaunié shows us where disregard of the sanctity of family relationships brought about suffering, even destruction. Stéphane Deschantres, as one example, in Un Simple, was brutally introduced to the sordid side of life by the questionable têtes à tête of his mother. Because of the constant nausea caused by her unfaithfulness, Stéphane finally left her with a last resolution to end his life in the murky waters of the Vic-Siège. Therefore, having first drawn from her son a great cry of accusation, and then, having caused his suicide, this mother came to realize in what maternal egoism may terminate.

Bonne-Dame was an affectionate and amiable creature, who tried to make herself loved by her daughter and son-in-law. But those two were so engaged in their selfish pleasures that they grew tired of Bonne-Dame. When it became obvious that she was a burden to them, she sought refuge in the Poor House. M. Estaunié here shows the urgent need for a greater respect toward old age and family ties.

Mme. Gros, in L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre, was almost classical in her regard for duty toward her drunken gambler of a husband. As an honest woman she refused the advances of M. Baslèvre, whose love for her, at first a blind force, later became the principal factor in his moral ascension. Moreover, as long as she lived, Claire Gros demanded sacrifices from her devoted friend, without giving the smallest compensation. But when she was dead, her posthumous letter carried to M. Baslèvre the expression of the deep love she bore with her à l'au delà.

1. Le Disciple., Un Divorce

The last novel, Tels qu'ils furent, bears testimony of the devotion a bourgeois family, of the middle 1800's, had for family honor. Adèle Doublet, rather than have a scandal arise from a business failure in her family, was willing to sacrifice all her worldly possessions. Again, rather than recognize a "mésalliance", which would bring stain on the family name, she over-exerted her-self in the aid of her child, and brought about her own death.

B. Treatment of Moral Problems.

Without openly giving the impression of being a moralist, as does Paul Bourget in his "romans a thèse", M. Estaunié has brought into his works many valuable moral lessons.

1. In Le Labyrinthe, the lie, which is the idea dominating the novel, is described as it tortures the mind and deforms the soul. The author seems much less concerned with the lie as it disobeys the moral code. By a careful analysis of the workings of their minds, he relates how a young married couple wandered aimlessly in the labyrinth of suspicion because they were living a lie. Their sincerity, and their love for one another were gradually destroyed. The character of the husband, François Pesnel, is portrayed with such inherent moral weakness that we wouldn't expect him to ever tell the whole truth. His mind was always in a whirl, evidenced by his confusion of emotions and reason.

Even after he had married Alice, he wasn't quite sure whether he had loved her or the figures her fortune represented. When he essayed to have the will declared void, he allowed written law to replace conscience. The wrong he had committed could never be righted by any legal procedure.

The lesson was well taught--the effects of a lie can never be wholly lost. In this particular instance, an untruth brought about the destruction of confidence and the complete isolation of a husband and wife.

2. In four of Edouard Estaunié's works, Un Simple, Bonne-Dame, L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre, and L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière, the

dominant idea is that of sacrifice. M. Estaunié believes that sacrifice is justified as a necessary factor to a moral order which, one day, rewards those who stake their life on it.

In Un Simple, the sacrifice of Stéphane Deschantres' life and happiness for that of his mother was without reward in this world. And, if we were to follow the teachings of the Catholic Church, of which M. Estaunié is a good member, there would be some doubt as to any reward in the next world for Stéphane because of his suicidal death.

We should however, consider his mental condition, the consequence of his mother's unfaithfulness and bitter accusations. Possibly his pursuit of death, which alone could not deceive him, was entirely justified.

This sacrifice was not morally valuable in any uplifting sense. It served to narrow, weaken, and finally destroy a young mind. It also showed what a mother's wickedness could do.

However, in Bonne-Dame, which was the novel of goodness and old age, the sacrifice was more complete. Bonne-Dame's life, after her daughter, Germaine's marriage, was composed of innumerable steps toward the completion of her sacrifice; first, when she moved away from Montauban; second, when she welcomed the two into her new lodging-house; third, when she sacrificed all those little pleasures and habits, dear to old age, in order not to inconvenience Germaine; fourth, when she assembled all those savings, earned by her many privations, in order to pay Aunt de Sallanches; and finally, when she left for the "Providence pour les gens du monde", realizing that she had become a burden to her own daughter.

All these sacrifices succeeded in making Bonne-Dame one of the most lovable of M. Eatunié's characters. Her recompense was not immediately received, because she never enjoyed real happiness, knowing ther Germaine did not love her. The author would have us believe, however, that reward awaited Bonne-Dame in Heaven.

When M. Baslèvre found that he couldn't have the love of Claire Gros, his love was transformed into a beautiful sentiment. "Subitement, au voisinage de Claire, le sacrifice de soi était apparu à M. Baslèvre, comme la forme possible d'une tendresse supérieure. A dater de là, ses yeux, auparavant fermés par le désir, avaient commencé de s'ouvrir. Il n'avait pas cessé d'aimer, mais déjà il aimait autrement, avec une plénitude, un élan et une douceur que la passion il s'en apercevait-ne peut atteindre. Parce qu'il ne voulait plus que le bonheur de Claire il en retrouvait un autre, le plus inattendu , et qui était le sien."[1]

Even though Claire had imposed silence on him while she lived, and had demanded many sacrifices from him, she gave M. Baslèvre, after her death, the means of attaining happiness. In L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre, sacrifice became a force in the moral ascension of its hero and in the consequent development of a beautiful soul.

The novel in which the problem of sacrifice has the best and most complete analysis is L'infirme aux Mains de Lumière. The sacrifice, which Théodat made for his invalid sister, is studied from the standpoint of duty.

Even though he had had little connection with his family, during the years previous to his father's death, Théodat keenly felt a

1. Estaunié L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre p. 134

responsibility toward his sister. Therefore, once established in Saint-Christol, he never turned back in memory to the fiancée whom he had been about to marry, nor to the position which success had recently earned for him. His thoughts ever embraced the present with its duty to be fulfilled.

This sacrifice was beneficial because of its inherent necessity. Its beauty lay, not in any immediate reward, but in a satisfaction in knowing that God knew and recognized it.

3. All of M. Estaunié's works are studies of human suffering. Because he himself has suffered a great deal from physical illness, especially since the death of his mother, he has been able to see beyond the normal lives about him and into the hearts of those miserable and solitary creatures who have become his book characters. Nearly every one of these personages, at some time during his life, has known the meaning of suffering.

Since suffering is so universal, M. Eataunié believes it finds a justification in all our lives. "Sans la souffrance, l'homme n'aurait jamais songé à l'immor-talité. Par la souffrance, il en acquiert le besoin et brisant les limites d'un présent qui ne compte plus, projette son existence véritable dans les régions de l'infini."[1.]

If we take the various characters in the order of their appearance, Stéphane Deschantres stands out as a youth who suffered inexorably. As a schoolboy he suffered from timidity; as a youth, from fear of his mother; and as a man, from the doubts concerning his mother's conduct, which doubts finally became concrete facts and caused him agony.

1. Estaunié L'Appel de la Route p. 325

His mother's final tête à tête with Marc Ferramus, along with her cruel accusation, culminated in his suicide. Here suffering brought death, but M. Estaunié does not believe that suffering is generally as destructive.

Bonne-Dame's suffering was of a totally different character. She was an affectionate mother whose love for her daughter was never reciprocated. Because of the indifference of Germaine, Bonne-Dame knew the meaning of suffering, and was strengthened by her sorrow.

In L'Empreinte, we perceive the mental sorrow which Leonard Clan felt in quest of his vocation. Because of the indelible imprint of his Jesuit education, he suffered agony in contemplating any life not religious. His life was dominated by the religious idea which had a tight grip on him. Finally, despairing of all success or pleasure in the outer world, Leonard gave himself to God.

La Vie Secrète presents at least three people who suffered, each his own particular sorrow. Perhaps M. Lethois was the most to be pitied, since his suffering and death were from his pride. Because he had an idea that he would one day be acclaimed a savant, he ruined his eyesight and shattered his nerves, in an endeavor to complete the introduction to a great book on ants. He had already been told of his weak condition, but he raced against time and lost.

Mlle. Peyrolles suffered regret because of her father's dismissal of her brother. She would have liked to have shared in the bringing up of her brother's son, but had to be content with making provision for his education. Her maternal affection finally found a place in the lives of her nephew's young wife and baby. Her sorrow and

loneliness increased her love for children, a love which was showered on her grand nephew.

Father Taffin was overwhelmed in sorrow at the loss of an ideal. He had loved a certain Saint Letgarde, who was proven a legendary figure in French history. That sorrow, which at first seemed overwhelming and deplorable, resulted in making the priest more pious, altruistic, and charitable.

Noémi Pégu, of Les Choses Voient, was one of the most sorrowful figures in all of Estaunié. After countless lies, false letters, and unpunishable crimes, she still wasn't sure of the name, the house, or the fortune she was seeking. Lurking in her way was the figure of M. Pichereau. First, he visited her as a timid, unpretentious cousin. Then he became more familiar, and one day was accompanied by his son, Juste. Soon he revealed great things--Line, Noémi's daughter, had a lover; he was in possession of her love notes. Unless Noémi would give her daughter in marriage to Juste, M. Pichereau threatened to reveal all. Although Noémi never suffered remorse in her battle for egoistical happiness, she did suffer the loss of daughter and heiress to Juste Pichereau.

Mme. Gros and M. Baslèvre both suffered because they were unable to express openly and freely their love. She suffered more, possibly because she realized how her husband's grossness had destroyed their love. This suffering, along with her illness, brought about her death, which, at least, relieved her of the infidelity of Gustave.

Naturally, as is to be expected, "le sens de la souffrance" has its fullest development in L'Appel de la Route. In this book, M.

Lormier and Mme. Manchon, the parents, suffered more than Geneviève Lormier and René La Gilardière, the children. M. Lormier had worked a lifetime on an invention whose success provided an ample dowry for his daughter. Gradually he had lost her; first to a lover, then to the Carmelite Nuns, and finally to Death. This suffering had two effects on him; first, a hatred of God; second, a desire to kill his daughter's lover.

Mme. Manchon suffered many privations in order to bring up her son, who was illegitimate. When she established him in Semur, in the Banque Chasseloup, she missed his companionship. She became jealous of his fiancée. Finally, she lost him through death in Morocco. Perhaps these two parents felt their individual sorrows more keenly, because their children had meant everything to them.

Mlle. Lormier's sorrow was a result of her passion for a man whom she had seen but a few times. When La Gilardière acknowledged a love for Annette Traversot, he little realized the jealousy he had aroused in the heart of the insignificant Geneviève Lormier. This jealousy became such an obsession with the girl that she spread stories in order to tear away her loved one from his fiancée. When scandal would not net immediate results, she threatened him further.

After the bank incident where the notes were lost, she lied to René saying that she committed the crime. She made it impossible for him to plead innocent. But remorse became her deepest sorrow. Finally, after deciding to write René the true story and repent her sins in the convent, she learned that he had been lately added to the deaths in the Foreign Legion at Morocco.

There were three ways in which sorrow entered the life of René La Gilardière. First there was his brother's proof that he was an illegitimate child. He felt no hatred toward his mother because of this birth but René realized the impossibility of his coming marriage to Annette Traversot. Gossip, one of the worst evils, helped to destroy his character. This was an added sorrow.

His third way of suffering resulted from the accusation of the Bank concerning the theft of the missing notes. This suffering, which carried with it no vehemence, brought about death. La Gilardière was a victim of circumstance.

Abbé Manchon had loved his father. He now hated his brother and felt a cold indifference toward his mother. On the eve of his father's death, he had received instructions to take away the name, Manchon, from his young brother. As a consequence of his illegitimacy, René received the title, La Gilardière. Unable to live with the one who had caused his father's suicide, the elder brother withdrew to a life in the service of God. His suffering grew out of an unhappy family life, and resulted in a more complete understanding of the problem of "la souffrance" and of its justification as "l'appel de la route."

4. Many of M. Estaunié's characters have one trait in common. "Ce sont de grands solitaires qui ne connaissent ni les abandons ni les épanchements. Ils vivent repliés sur leur âme comme des dragons sur leur trésor."[1] Pierre Jauffrelin, in Solitudes, is representative of these lonely personages.. The book itself contains the most complete treatment of the enhancing problem of solitude.

1. Fidus Revue des Deux Mondes p. 359

M. Estaunié believes that solitude assumes many forms. It may take that of ennui, jealousy, or dissatisfaction with life. A person may be lonely beside a loved one; for, "Etre seul n'est pas vivre dans le silence et hors de toute présence humaine: c'est écouter des paroles et ne pouvoir les entendre, être possédé par une femme et ne pouvoir l'atteindre;....c'est surtout, à l'heure où l'on se croit maître d'une âme, découvrir en elle des paysages lointains, inaccessibles et si vastes que ce qu'on croyait connaître ne compte plus."[1] Solitude is essential to existence. We know little about it because it is always present. "Mais qu'importe de bien ou mal définir un mal qu'on ne peut guérir? Il n'existe pas d'être vivant qui, à une heure ou une autre, n'ait souffert désespérément d'être solitaire: voilà le fait."[2]

To the question, "Pourquoi, même à ses minutes les plus heureuses, l'homme conserve t-il la cruelle assurance de son isolement?"[3] M. Estaunié answers, "....la solitude se cache sous le dessin fantaisiste des destinées humaines."[4]

Pierre Jauffrelin was insanely jealous and wrongfully accused his wife of infidelity. The village priest, Abbé Rouville, to whom he confided his suspicions of Arlette, advised him to seek refuge in God's goodness. When Pierre spurned religious consolation, he was told there would be no other. The priest admitted, himself, having recognized the evil of solitude, of which we are all victims. In order not to remain quite alone, he had taken haven in the priesthood, as had Pierre in marriage. But the latter's failure lay in seeking a fusion of two beings into one soul. Such a union is an impossibility, since

1. Estaunié Solitudes p. 237
2. Estaunié Solitudes p. 3
3. Estaunié Solitudes p. 137
4. Estaunié Solitudes p. 138

man is alone, obligatorily.

To Pierre, love meant not so much possession of a woman's body, but possession of the thoughts that flower within her mind and the images of her dream. This is the loneliness which exists beside a loved one. In this case, Pierre preferred death, which was selfish because it only caused others untold suffering.

But M. Estaunié does not believe that solitude generally brings death. Two of the most solitary figures imaginable are M. Baslèvre and Anselme Théodat. The former had never remarked his loneliness before he met Claire Gros. As his love for her increased, he suffered the solitude of separation from a loved one.

After Claire's death, he wasn't so lonely becuase he had become cognizant of her great love. His week-ends in her apartment, when he communed with her spiritually, helped to alleviate the sorrow her loss caused. Solitude brought M. Baslèvre a little nearer Heaven and the one who was instrumental in the full development of his soul.

Anselme Théodat, in L'Infirme aux Mains de Lumière, suffered countless privations in order to arrive at a business success which would assure him an excellent marriage. Then he had to leave his fiancée and a good position and become accustomed to the solitary quiet life of Saint-Christol. He never felt remorse, however, but was uplifted as a result of his sacrifice and loneliness.

C. M. Estaunié has rightly earned the name of psychologist of "la vie secrète." Beginning with his earliest works there is a careful analysis of those thoughts and feelings which constitute the inner life.

Perhaps in La Vie Secrète, itself, there is the best illustration of the "idée directrice." In the words of René Gillouin, "Il est entièrement original, je veux parler de cette obsession qu'il a du secret enseveli au fond de leur âme, et que les conventions de la vie sociale peuvent les obliger à masquer où à opprimer ....Ce contraste constamment et violemment éprouvé entre l' apparence et la réalité, le superficiel et le profond, les conditions de la vie sociale et celles de la vie intérieure, c'est le thème central de la sensibilité et de la pensée de M. Estaunié..."[1.]

None of the characters in La Vie Secrète find any correlation between their inner life and their public life. In the opening pages of the book, M. Lethois, Abbé Taffin, and Mlle. Peyrolles all met under ordinary circumstances. There were the commonplace gestures and usual courtesies, but what was essential, was what wasn't seen.

M. Lethois, believing himself a savant, was contemplating a magnificent thesis on ants, when temporary blindness ruined the possibility of further work. Because he had never entrusted his secret to human hearts, he was unable to bequeath the result of his research, for the enrichment of science. M. Lethois' secret life was egoistical, and a strong factor in his sudden death.

Although his parishioners and closest friends were unaware of it, Abbé Taffin was in love with a saint. When he learned that this

1. Gillouin Esquisses littéraires et morales p. 31

Saint Letgarde was only legendary, his happiness in living seemed crushed to the ground. But the joy of life was multiplied through the devotion he meted out to his people.

Mlle. Peyrolles experienced a new joy during the short while that her nephew lived under her roof. But her motherly love for him was in no way reciprocated, for, Marc had only come in search of aid for a sick mistress, and did not intend to remain. She was more disappointed still, when he refused to be married in the Church.

At first, Christian duty compelled her not to assist this Godless individual. Finally, nature overpowered her, and Mlle. Peyrolles helped Marc with financial assistance. Her life resumed its normal course, more enriched because of charity shown others.

In L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre we watch the various phases of a moral metamorphosis. A great love, more and more purified, transforms an old man, hardened by thirty years of routine life. Did a glacial appearance hide the secret life which was going to reveal the true Baslèvre? Yes, there really existed a second Baslèvre, but his soul had been in lethargy for more than thirty years.

When the shock came--his meeting with Claire Gros a young married woman--this man of fifty-five invoked the rights of passion and argued for the betrayal of Gustave Gros. Claire would not listen to the breaking off of her unhappy marriage, and silenced his outbursts of love. There began the moral ascension.

After Claire's death, M. Baslèvre became lost in a labyrinth of grief, of anguish in losing her. Gustave assured him, however, of his dead wife's love. His week-ends spent in the Gros apartment were

as unknown to the outer world, as was this great devotion for Claire. But this secret life made M. Baslèvre more sensitive to the joys and sorrows of those about him, consequently more charitable toward mankind.

On the other side was the drama in which Mlle. Fouille played the leading role. In public life she was the quiet teacher, instructing the participles, but, secretly she was in love with a gambler, by coincidence, Gustave Gros. Her passion caused her untold suffering, for, she was entirely ignorant of Gustave's married life. When finally he forgot her, she realized how a selfish life is without reward.

The theme of Tels qu'ils furent, "le décor de la réalité masque les seules vies véritables," bears further proof of M. Estaunié's power as author of "la vie secrète." The principal illustration lies in the true life of Adèle Doublet, which clothed, under the rudeness of convention, the most intense maternal ardor. Jean, the young nephew, was the only person who really understood Aunt Adèle. He realized that she needed Aurélie, if ever a mother needed a child, but he also knew she prefered her death to recognizing Aurélie's marriage.

Furthermore, the real Aurélie was not the person Jean saw at the dinner-table, nor the one he played with in the garden. The true Aurélie was the girl who one day gave him her confidences. Grief-stricken and violently emotional, she revealed herself. She had so wanted to be loved, and now found she had the alternative of giving in to the family or revolting. Jean was the only one who really knew his cousin, and her reasons for revolting as she did.

M. Estaunié certainly knows the agony of the drama, "le sens de la mystère." He knows how many are the secrets that reality covers

under her wings. The real and deep life, being hidden and invisible, has much more importance to him than all outward appearances. "M. Estaunié a cadastré l'âme humaine. Il en a borné le bonheur et la bassesse. Sous d'instables apparences quotidiennes, il a mis à nu de la vérité éternelle et multiforme. Il a dénoncé nos douleurs et nos ambitions. Il a accompli so belle tâche de romancier avec toute sa pénétration, toute sa clairvoyance, toute sa patience, toute son énergie, toute sa foi."[1.]

1. Trocmé <u>Revue bleue</u> p. 838

D. M. Estaunié has a preference for selecting scenes as settings for his works, that are little frequented by him. He also has the feeling that in these smaller unknown "endroits" the inner life has a fuller and freer development. In a few of his works the scenes were fairly familiar; the plain of Balpech of Un Simple, the neighboring village of Saint-Julia in La Vie Secrète, and the House in Les Choses Voient which belonged to some one of his family. But, on the other hand, he had only spent five hours in Nevers, the scene of L'empreinte, while he had remained but one day at Spa of Le Ferment. "Et l'inoubliable Semur de L'Appel de la Route, il ne l'a visité qu'un après-midi. Mais les gens de Semur ne démentiraient pas les lecteurs de la Revue qui se flattaient de connaître leur ville. Il saisit avec une précision étonnant l'aspect des choses et n'évoque ou ne décrit jamais mieux que ce qu'il a vu très vite."[1]

E. "Mr. Galsworthy's dictum that style is the removal of all barriers between author and reader is exemplified in the slow perfection of craftsmanship that distinguishes M. Estaunié's novels."[2]

Each novel has a clearness to it that makes all narration easily comprehended. "Les événements s'y déroulent nombreux, pressés, dramatiques, avec une logique implacable et déroutante, dont le mécanisme singulier, propre à M. Estaunié, nous apparaîtra tout à l'heure."[3]

The descriptive passages are clear and concise. There is somewhat of a moderation in the use of images and figures of speech. In some places the dialogue is witty and rapid, in other places, slow and profound. But perhaps that which most characterizes M. Estaunié's

1. Fidus Revue des Deux Mondes p. 357
2. Henry Introduction to L'Appel de la Route p. VII
3. Gillouin Esquisses litt. et morales p. 32

style is his power to adapt concise language to the expression of the great truths of life. Many of these "Pensées" have been included under the works in which they were found. Quite an interesting and beautiful collection could be easily made of them.

"L'âme humaine est la seule grève où le flot passe sans effacer la trace du flot qui précéda."[1.]

"Le charme est un don qui enchante à la fois qui le possède et qui en approche."[2.]

"Une maison sans fleurs serait une maison sans âme."[3.]

And now for the reader who will be truly appreciative of the work of a great French artist there awaits a pleasant surprise. To be carried along by the beauty and clearness of style, to be intrigued by the rapidity of the narrative, and to make the acquaintance of some of the most lonely, yet lovable characters in all fiction, that is the happiness which attends on the one who seeks to be morally elevated to the plane on which M. Edouard Estaunié verily must dwell.

1. Estaunié L'Appel de la Route p. 256
2. Estaunié L'Appel de la Route p. 133
3. Estaunié L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre p. 135

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